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**Subject:** Please RSVP for tomorrow's security committee meeting WED Sept. 9 at 10 a.m. at Salvation Army  
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Greetings Security Committee

Just confirming attendance for tomorrow's meeting at the Salvation Army. I have only received one RSVP (Carol Massie)

Also, I am attaching a few important articles re/ positive outcomes by our LAPD and City Attorney (see press coverage of conviction of Joker) and an op ed piece in the Wall Street Journal by our former Chief, Bill Bratton (scroll down).  
<http://www.dailynews.com/general-news/20150907/on-hollywood-boulevard-unruly-characters-get-cut-from-scene>

Many thanks

Kerry

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WALL STREET JOURNAL

Policing 'Awful but Lawful' Times Square Panhandling

Costumed characters and topless women have rights, but so do citizens. The city is exploring its options.

By

William J. Bratton

Sept. 4, 2015 6:46 p.m. ET

Let's begin with a reality check. The current flap about New York City's Times Square—and both its costumed and un-costumed characters—has led numerous observers to comment that the square is slipping back to the seedy and dangerous conditions of the early 1990s. One has to ask if any of these observers were actually in New York in 1990, much less whether they had real familiarity with 42nd Street.



As chief of the city's transit police in 1990, and then as police commissioner in 1994-96, I certainly did, and it was a vastly different place. Porno theaters, peep shows and sex shops lined the streets within and around Times Square. Prostitutes plied their trade in the theaters and on the avenues and in the alleys. The drug trade was in full cry, and destitute addicts haunted the sidewalks and the subways. Thieves and thugs were everywhere, and crime was rampant.

To equate current conditions to the square of 25 years ago is preposterous. Today's Times Square is flooded, day and night, with tourists and their children. High-end office buildings, commercial establishments and legitimate theaters are the norm. Gone are the open-air drug deals, streetwalkers and other signs of serious disorder. The area records about one major crime each day.

These changes were wrought by focused and relentless police work, beginning in the subways in 1990, and by visionary city planning and development. Together we took back Grand Central Terminal, Bryant Park, Times Square and all of 42nd Street from the forces of disorder. There is no possibility that Mayor Bill de Blasio<<http://topics.wsj.com/person/d/Bill-de%20Blasio/7176>> and I, or any other mayor and police commissioner, will let the hard-won gains slip away.

And they are most certainly not slipping away—this has been New York City's safest summer in more than 25 years. But if I had said in 1990 that a guy dressed as the Cookie Monster would occupy a week of breathless newspaper coverage, I would have been greeted with laughter and derision.

[Ready to play the Muppet character 'Elmo' in New York's Time Square, Aug. 21.]

Ready to play the Muppet character 'Elmo' in New York's Time Square, Aug. 21. Photo: Li Muzi/Xinhua/Zuma Press

The heart of the current problem is that we have established, in the form of the Times Square pedestrian mall, a public space without public-space rules. Designated public spaces, such as parks and public transportation, are subject to stricter rules of conduct than the streets. The pedestrian mall is not currently such a space—and unless they are behaving aggressively or threateningly, neither the costumed characters nor the ladies who have been dubbed the “desnudas” are breaking the law.

We have an expression in police work: “It looks awful but it's lawful,” and that's the situation we have here. People are offended and distressed by the spectacle, but in many cases the spectacle qualifies as free speech under the law.

Because commercial activity is involved, we may be able to act against some of the “awful-but-lawful” disorder by ensuring that individuals are paying the taxes that make the city work, and that they are not violating applicable business and vending rules. And we will of course intervene whenever aggressive begging occurs or public safety is threatened. But getting the law right in these circumstances is a challenge even for lawyers.

Since I was last police commissioner two decades ago, the legal tools available to deal with public disorder have changed. Laws against disorderly conduct, loitering, begging and public nudity have been redefined by court cases and legislation. There is now a good deal more nuance to nuisance.

This is why we are establishing a Times Square Unit. The NYPD will not create a variation on the stop, question and frisk controversy by sending its least experienced cops out to parse constitutional subtleties. Instead, in keeping with the neighborhood policing practiced in other parts of the city, I want the officers who work Times Square to know the ground, know the players and, most of all, know the law.



Given all this, the task force that Mayor de Blasio has established to deal with topless women, costumed individuals and other issues surrounding the square, such as traffic and public safety, makes eminent sense. Indeed, I am hopeful that the task force, on which I will be serving, can explore a range of options for addressing Times Square, including regulatory possibilities. It can also provide a collaborative, multi-stakeholder review of issues such as disorder and crime, traffic flow, traffic safety and—most important for a place that has been the site of two terrorist events in the past eight years, and was a stated target of the Boston Marathon bombers—counterterrorism.

Times Square is a jewel of New York City, and has earned its nickname as the Crossroads of the World. Thoughtful consideration about what kind of space we want it to be is exactly what we need.

Mr. Bratton is the New York City police commissioner.



Agenda  
Sunset & Vine BID  
Hollywood Entertainment District  
Jt. Security Meeting  
Wednesday September 9, 2015  
10:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.  
The Way In – Salvation Army  
5939 Hollywood Blvd.

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- I. Call to Order
- II. Public Comment
- III. Meeting Notes  
Review of notes from July 9, 2015 meeting
- IV. New Business
  - A. Staff updates on current issues
    - 1. Status of Sidewalk vending ordinance
    - 2. State Legislation
      - a. AB 718 (Chu) - Removal of Regulatory Authority: Vehicles Used For Human Habitation
    - 3. Homeless issues in neighborhood
      - a. review of data from monthly homeless count
      - b. review of recent media reports
      - c. stakeholder complaints and problem solving meetings
      - d. meeting and tour planned with Assemblymember Richard Bloom and State Senator Ben Allen in late September
      - e. announcement by Dept. of Mental Health re/ three new intervention strategies for homeless individuals suffering from mental illness
    - 4. [www.hollywoodsafesidewalks.org](http://www.hollywoodsafesidewalks.org)
      - a. Committee member assistance needed to help distribute flyers re/ street characters, CD vendors and panhandling
- V. Partner Reports
  - A. Report from Andrews International
  - B. Partner Reports
    - 1. LAPD Hollywood Division
    - 2. City Attorney's Office – Neighborhood Prosecutor
    - 3. LA County Sheriff
- VI. Old Business
- VII. Adjourn – Next Meeting Wed. October 14





Los Angeles Business Journal

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## Hollywood Boulevard Joker Jailed

By HOWARD FINE

Friday, September 4, 2015

It's no laughing matter: The Joker has been put out of business.

A character costumed as Batman antagonist The Joker who was arrested last month after scaring customers in a Hollywood Boulevard store has been sentenced to 10 days in jail and three years' probation. He's also been ordered to stay away from the Hollywood tourist zone, according to the Los Angeles city attorney's office.

Jose Luis Garcia, 28, was arrested after an Aug. 27 incident in which he dressed as the Joker and hid behind a floor display in the LaLaLand souvenir store on Hollywood Boulevard near the TCL Chinese Theatre. The store manager observed Garcia jump out in an attempt to scare customers. When the manager approached and asked Garcia to leave, the Joker pushed the manager in the chest.

Garcia was charged with one-count of intentional interference with a business establishment.

This week's conviction marks the 12th prosecution of individuals dressed as movie and celebrity characters who have allegedly committed crimes, including assaulting tourists; the issue has long simmered as a sore point with local merchants.

"An arrest and conviction like this sends a strong message to the other costumed characters ... that this will not be tolerated," said Kerry Morrison, executive director of the Hollywood Property Owners Alliance.

City Attorney Mike Feuer underscored the need to keep tourists safe from any assaults by the costumed characters.

"Millions of visitors come from around the world to Hollywood and my office is focused on making sure that their experience is a safe one," City Attorney Mike Feuer said in a release Friday detailing the conviction.

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